



Parent Liaison News

Newsletter #3. September 2000. It is my hope you may find the following information of interest and perhaps useful for discussion during Parent Advisory Committee meetings.

If you are no longer the PAC Chairperson, please let me know and pass along this newsletter to your new PAC Chairperson. Thank you.

Stories to Share

I received this story from a parent about a teacher who goes beyond normal expectations to deliver services to a student. This teacher considers what she is doing just part of her "job" as a teacher. Our hats are off to Mrs. Essenberg from Ellsworth Elementary School. Here's the Mom's story:

"Mrs. Essenberg offered to take Danielle to the high school basketball game. Danielle's classmates (4th, 5th and 6th grade girls) would be playing a game at halftime after weeks of mini camp on Saturdays. Danielle can not play due to her visual impairment and physical disabilities. We do not attend many school activities after hours because her brother has autism and does not adapt well to strange situations. Mrs. Essenberg has included Danielle in every activity that her other 6th graders have had the opportunity to experience. Even when she has had to take her to make it possible."

Isn't this a wonderful story! What stories do some of the rest of you have to share? I know that we have many wonderful teachers and support staff personnel across the state who have similar stories. Let's use this forum as a beginning of a celebration in the fact that there are people who believe in making a difference.

Please feel free to use the short form I have included if you would like to share a story or just send me a short clip.

A PAC Story

The PAC in Gogebic-Ontonagon is planning to start the school year off with a great idea. It is an ice cream social event planned for this fall. The idea behind this event is a networking opportunity for parents to get to know other parents, and for kids to know other kids. They have planned an ice breaker activity using names and Pine Forest Ventures out of Mercer Wisconsin who will be coming to do a wheelchair basketball event. They ask for volunteers to play basketball from wheelchairs to help raise awareness. Sounds like fun.

Information from Gwen Pierce,
Chairperson, Gogebic-Ontonagon PAC.

What does your PAC do to promote awareness of your PAC? Do you have awards for special teachers, an events night, or a cook-out? Let me know and we can showcase some ideas here that work for you and they may work for others. Together we can be awesome.

OSEP Monitoring

Michigan has been notified that we are one of 16 states that have been selected for monitoring by the Federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). We have begun a self-assessment process that includes over 125 people from across the state. There are over 150 indicators (or questions) that we are searching for data to back up our answers and finding that in some cases we have no data and

need to develop a plan to get some information in the future. This will help our state and help make education for our children better.

If you happen to be included in this process, you know that this is requiring some major work from all parties involved. If you happen to be contacted for some information or by survey, please be sure to quickly complete and return. Your help is appreciated.

This report has to be submitted by December 22, 2000. After OSEP has read our report, they will inform us when they will be here to monitor and what they will be looking at during this monitoring process.

I have included an Invitation to a Series of Public Meetings, dates of these meetings, and discussion questions in this packet. Please share this information.

Places to visit on the web

I came across a site on the internet that you will want to bookmark and keep track of the information offered here. They currently have a very nice IEP Guide. The site is:
www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP

The Presidential Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities unveiled a new Web site. The site provides information on federal resources and services available to people with disabilities and their parents and teachers. Visit the site at: www.disability.gov

If you are the parent of a child with Downs syndrome or even if you are not, you may find this site interesting www.bandofangels.com They have some pictures, calendars, stationary available.

Have you visited the MDE/OSE-EIS web site lately? We keep it updated and have lots of information that you may find helpful.

www.mde.state.mi.us/off/sped/

PAC Conference

The State PAC hosted a conference for PAC Chairpersons and members on August 3-4, 2000 in Frankenmuth. The conference was well attended and the updates provided will be helpful to many parents. Was nice to see so many of you there and to have the networking and sharing time.

Conferences

Growth for Families

The year 2001 is the year for the Growth for Families Conference. This conference is being planned by the Oakland PAC and Oakland Schools. This will be the fifth conference under the name of Growth for Families. This conference is held every two years, moved around the state, and is hosted by a PAC and School District. Oakland is planning a great conference and we hope to get many families. Save the dates of October 19-20, 2001. Seems like a long way off but time does have a habit of flying by doesn't it?

**Council for Exceptional Children
(CEC)**

This conference will be held February 28, March 1-2 at the Amway Grand in Grand Rapids. Watch and ask about information regarding this conference.

Contact Wendy Haight for parent membership information.
Office: 517-797-4785.

If your PAC has a newsletter or if you have some back copies on hand, please send them to me and ask that I get added to your mailing list. I get contacted from time to time for examples of newsletters and would really like to have some. I know that several PACs do newsletters and really would like to have the opportunity to promote the hard work that you do in producing your newsletters. Thank you!

If you have handbooks that have been updated to IDEA and the Regulations would you please send me a copy. Just this month, I was asked for some examples of handbooks. I have a couple but would like to have yours to hand out also. Just one or two copies would be fine – I don't have that large of an office and can copy here if needed.

I would appreciate some feedback if this is helpful to you or what other kinds of information you would find useful. If you want to receive this electronically, please let me know.

As always, I am happy to hear from you. Let me know how your PAC is doing. Any questions? I will try to find the answer!

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This information is provided as a resource to parents who are active in Parent Advisory Committees and other school-based activities. Reference to web-sites, publications and other sources of information does not infer endorsement by the Michigan Department of Education.

